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A

Modest Vindication
OF THE
Church of ENGLAND,
From the Scandal of
P O P E R Y.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

Tis a hard Condition : The Church of England professeth the ancient Catholick Faith, and yet the Romanist condemns her of Novelty in her Doctrine : She practiseth Church-Government as it hath been in use in all Ages and Places where the Church of Christ hath taken any Rooting, both in, and ever since the Apostles Times, and yet the Separatist condemns her for Antichristianism in her Discipline. The plain Truth is, She is between these two Factions as between two Mill-stones.

Arch-Bishop Laud against Fisher.

LO N D O N :

Printed for J. Baker at the Black Boy in Paternoster-Row, 1710.



Modest Vindication

OF THE Church of England, &c.

SIR,
 THIS wholly in compliance with your importunate and repeated Sollicitations, and out of the great Desire I have to satisfie one of your Persuasion in any thing that is made a Pretence to separate from the Church of *England*, that at this time I am persuaded to trouble you with this long and tedious Letter; so without any Apology for my Insufficiency in such an Undertaking, and presuming that you are fully convinced of the Sincerity of my Intentions, I will endeavour to remove that grand Obstacle of Reconciliation that stands in the way, and prevents your Communion with your National Church; you have often assur'd me, that you could willingly comply with our Constitution, were you not afraid that it either actually labours under the guilt of Popery, or is in a direct tendency to it; I confess, this is a very opprobrious Charge, and I do not know a more effectual way to affix an odious Ignominy upon our Church, than by laying the Im-

putation of Popery upon it ; yet you your self have been so ingenuous as to confess, that you are altogether ignorant of the Particulars of this Calumny ; but you presume, that so many Men, of very eminent Parts and Honesty, would never joyn, and so vigorously unite in this Accusation at random, and upon meer Conjectures ; and upon this Supposition you infer, that the Church must actually be so affected. I must needs tell you, Sir, that I am concern'd, to find you so credulous in a Matter of so great Consequence, and that you will not take the pains to examine the bottom of things before you pass your Judgment upon them : However, I am confident that you are not singular in this Point ; for I do not question but the greatest part of those who are very violent, to impose this brand of Infamy upon our Constitution, are equally under the same Obscurity, and are as little acquainted with the Reasons of it as your self ; therefore, to remove this Egyptian Darkness, and the unnatural Results of it, I will briefly discover to you the most substantial Grounds of this Calumny, and the insufficiency of them, to justifie your Schism from the Church, chiefly for your own, and partly for the Satisfaction of any modest and sober Enquirer. And

First, the Church of *England* lies under the Imputation of Popery, because she is under the Jurisdiction of Bishops, and an Episcopal Clergy, and as such is condemn'd for Symbolizing with the Church of *Rome* ; I will not insist upon the Apostolical Institution, and the Antiquity of Episcopacy, to evince the unreasonableness of this Objection ; since a Man of ordinary Observation will easily perceive that Popery meets with no greater Opposition than from Episcopacy ; for the very Formality of Pope-

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ry is the Pope's Jurisdiction over all other Bishops, as being the Source of all Episcopal Power, all Bishops depending upon him, and swearing Allegiance to him ; but Episcopacy establish'd in its just Extent is fundamentally opposite to this Arbitrary Power of the Pope, and brings him upon a Level and Primitive Equality with other Bishops : Nay, 'tis morally impossible, that the Bishops of our Church should be in the least disposed that way, since they have given the greatest Security that one Man can give another to the contrary ; they subscribe to the Thirty Nine Articles, take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and absolutely disclaim all the Errors of the Church of *Rome*, and particularly all Subjection to the Pope, or dependance upon him ; And of this the Church of *Rome* is so fatally sensible, that upon the Vote for abolishing Episcopacy in our late Troubles, she sang *Goreans*, and made sure of establishing Popery in this Kingdom. Not to say what real and faithful Service hath been done by our Bishops to the Protestant Cause, and how they have unanswerably opposed the Extravagancies of the Church of *Rome*, as their most impregnable Defence of the Reformation. This, Sir, was the common Theme of popular Obloquy in our civil Distractions, but when our Adversaries had accomplish'd their Designs, and triumph'd upon the ruin of Episcopacy, they could not invent what Model of Government should succeed it ; and upon supposition that they had the same Power of refining our Religion (as they term it) at this time (which God prevent they may ever have) they would find it as impracticable as ever to accomplish ; for it is absurd to imagine that such a Medley of Religions should ever unite into one Uniform Body, and it is equally

It is absurd to propose a Settlement of themselves in several distinct Parties, so as to give undisturb Toleration to each other ; for it is to be consider'd, that there are no Parties in this or any other Nation so exactly poised, that they have equal Numbers and Interests, there is always one of them which overballances the rest, and is the Religion of the State, and must naturally increase and grow powerful, and consequently upon the least prospect of succeeding, will impose its own Discipline upon the rest, which will soon overthrow their Toleration : Since therefore, 'tis impossible for our Dissenters to unite into one National Church, or subsist in separate Parties, one would think that they must necessarily comply with Episcopacy, as the only Sanctuary where they might expect Peace and Unity ; especially, since it is so blended with our Civil Constitution, and consonant to the Scheme of Monarchy, that upon its Dissolution, Atheism and Heresie, Anarchy and Confusion, would inevitably overset the whole Frame of the Government. This the Experience of our late Times found to be true, and then those who were so violent to subvert this Apostolical Institution, when they saw what an Inundation of Sectaries rush'd in upon them, were forced to acknowledge that the Discipline which they had destroyed, was a great check and restraint to those Errors which grew bold and licentious under their adored Liberty ; then the Bishops who just before were rendred odious, by all the Arts of Defamation that could be used, had unwillingly some good Words dropt upon them, and their D'ligence and Success, in suppressing Heretical and Blasphemous Doctrines, was allow'd some just Commendation.

The Consequence of this Mistake hath been another of the same Nature, and equally false ; Men have imagined that since Episcopacy (as they think) is of Popish Extraction, the inferiour Clergy of the Kingdom must be under the immediate influence of their Leaders, and consequently upon the first opportunity, they will embrace the Interests of the Church of *Rome* ; upon this Account I presume they are so often branded with the unjust and odious Names of Papists, Jacobites, and I know not what false and rediculous Calumnies ; if a Man is but one degree above Indifferency, and somewhat Zealously, insists upon and prefers the Government of Bishops before a Consistory of Divines, or according to his Profession is an assertour of the Rights of his establisht Religion, he must be a Friend to Popery, a Rebel to God and his Country, and prosecuted for High Crimes and Misdemeanours ; he must be rendered odious by the severest Reflections that Wit and Malice can invent, so that whosoever killeth him, will think that he doth God Service : I must needs say, that this is a very odd way of Compensation for a Man's Honesty, for his Zeal to the Church and his Religion : But to evince the monstrous Absurdity of this Imputation, I will insist only upon one Argument, obvious almost to every Man's Memory and Observation. Some Years since, Popery had a very fair prospect of a Settlement amongst us, having such an immoderate Protection from the Government, that it had the Confidence to hope for a legal Establishment in the Kingdom : But, Sir, if you remember those secret Friends to Popery, the Episcopal Clergy, were the only Persons that enter'd the Lists, and shewed such an invincible Courage and Zeal against those Innovations, that they counter-

min'd the whole Scheme of the Party, so that they were often forced to shift the Controversie; one while insinuating themselves with the People, by charging the Clergy with an open compliance with the Interests of *Rome*: When that fail'd, they accus'd them of secret Combinations with the Enemy to introduce Popery; but still they were repuls'd, to the immortal Honour of the true Sons of the Church: This was a Passage of so much Glory to them, and so great and illustrious a Demonstration of their Integrity, that one would think that Malice it self would be ashame'd to lay any Imputation of inclining to Popery, either to the Church, or Churchmen of *England*, were it not that some Men will never be out of Countenance, and when once they have lost all sense of Modesty, they cannot be supposed to have any regard to Truth. And I cannot but observe, that at this time when Popery was coming in, like a Land-flood upon our Constitution, that those Men who pretend to sweat at the very Shadow of it, and that their Zeal is the only Bulwark against it, were very quiet and unconcern'd, from which any reasonable Man would conclude, that they have not such an Aversion to Popery as they pretend, and that Terms of Accommodation might easily be admitted between them and the Church of *Rome*. I am sure, when the Clergy of *England* were in their lowest Fortune, Popery had their greatest Indulgence in this Kingdom, the Papists were exempted from the Punishment of Penal Laws more than ever they were before; no Oath of Allegiance or Supremacy was prestid upon them, our Liturgy and Common-Prayer were taken away, so that there was no way to discover, or legally convict a Popish Recusant; and any Man will grant, that the same

Causes

Causes may have the same Effects, and what once hath been done, is possible to be done again.

This was the only Argument produced against our Clergy to justifie their Inclination to Popery, when Mens Suspicions were very violent, and a great Jealousie was entertain'd upon that account: But now of late, not only our Dissenters, but Persons of their own Order, have been so uncharitable as to appear in the Front of their most inveterate Accusers, and brand them for Papists, upon a more frivolous and groundless Supposition than what I mention'd before. I should be ashame to discover the weakness of some of the Clergy, by informing you of the Reasons they produce for this Calumny, were it not that they have been so imprudent as to expose themselves in the Face of the whole Nation; and many of our Reverend Prelates have been immoderately hot in affixing this Imputation upon their Fellow-Labourers, and upon no other account, I assure you, then for maintaining the Doctrine of Non-Resistance and absolute Passive Obedience. A Doctrine, as it's confirm'd by the Authority of the first Founders of our Church, and by Precedents of the Primest Antiquity, so has it been deliver'd down to us through the gloomy Ages of Heresie, Popery, and Republicanism, without restraint or limitation, and hath been the distinguishing Chatacteristick of the Church of *England*. I am sensible it hath been often curtail'd and minc'd to suit the squeamish Digestion of Persons of Latitude and Republican Nations; but what hath been the result of it but Resistance, Treason and Rebellion? Had the Doctrine of Non-Resistance been observ'd in its full Extent and abstracted from all upstart Exceptions, the Blood of the Royal Martyr had not been to be atoned for by

by us and our Posterity. This is matter of Fact, and I am sorry that so many great Lights of our Church are so resolute in opposing this Principle, so as to betray a weakness and inconsistency: For since the Liberty of the Subject is sufficiently provided for by the Laws, what would Men of Honesty desire more? would they allow the Prince no Security against the Insults of his Subjects? would they make him precarious to be blown in and out at their Pleasure? Men of honesty or Conscience would not be so unreasonable to desire, and Persons of Sense and Ingenuity would be ashame'd to be under the Government of such a Childish Nominal-Sovereign. These Accusers do further maliciously suggest, that the Queen's Title is immediately struckt at by this Principle, the Doctrin of Non-Resistance (as they think) being inconsistent with the Revolution; but this is meer Cant and Sophistry: For, as their Supposition is false, since there was no Resistance at the Revolution, so 'tis self evident that the Queen by Right of Succession hath an Hereditary Title to the Crown, which doth not depend upon the Revolution, and is very consonant with the Doctrine of Non-Resistance. I shall not engage further in this Point, but refer you to the learned Disputes extant upon it, where you may receive full and compleat satisfaction. Yet how by maintaining the Doctrine of Non-Resistance our Clergy are disposed for Popery, I cannot imagine, unless it be by their asserting the Hereditary Title of the Queen; I am sensible that this and more hath been presum'd by a Prelate of our Church, who peremptorily says that the Assertors of Hereditary Right will be call'd on, from their own Concessions, to worship the Idol that they may set up, and consequently introduce Popery by Establish-

stablishing the presumptive Heir in the Throne: But this is infinitely more than his Lordship could charitably suppose, since (if Oaths are allow'd to have any obligation) the Assertors of Non-Resistance have given a good Security to maintain the Protestant Succession, as his Lordship or the most Bigotted Zealot to a limited Obedience can possibly produce. Not to say, that the Hereditary Title of the Queen is the only way (humanely speaking) by which the Protestant Succession can possibly be secured.

The Church of *England* lies under the Imputation of Popery because She makes use of a Liturgy, and a prescrib'd Form of Prayer, part whereof has been took out of the Service in the Roman Communion. But this Objection is very unreasonable, since 'tis uncontestable that set Forms of Prayer were admitted in the Church, before the Church of *Rome* had contracted so much Pollution as to be under the Imputation of Popery, and consequently the Primitive Church is equally liable to this charge with the Church of *England*; and for a further Answer, I will recite the Opinion of the Great *Calvin*, whose Aversion to Popery was never yet question'd. *As to a Form of Prayers (says he) and Ecclesiastical Rites, I do very much approve of the publishing a fixed one, from which it may not be lawful for the Pastors to depart in the exercise of their Function, thereby to provide against the Simplicity and Unskilfulness of some, and that the consent of all the Churches with each other might more certainly appear; and lastly, to put a Bar to the unconstant Levity of others, who are immoderately taken with Innovations.* And it is easie to shew, that Simolizing with the Church of *Rome* herein, is so far from being culpable, that it is highly commendable, since

Since it is absolutely impossible to have the performance of Publick Worship executed with that solemn Gravity that becomes it, in a Church where its Ministers are wholly left free to the exercising of extemporary Invention ; and this may easily be demonstrated from the Words of very remarkable Preachers in the late Rebellion, who in their extemporary Effusions, plainly told God, that, *If he did not finish the good Work which he had begun in the Reformation of the Church, he would shew himself to be the God of Confusion, and such an one as by cunning Stratagems had contriv'd the Destruction of his own Children : That God would bless the King, and mollifie his hard Heart that delights in Blood, for that he was fallen from Faith in God, and become an Enemy to his Church : Let thy Hand, we pray thee, O Lord our God, be upon him, and upon his Father's House, but not upon thy People, that they should be plagued : O God ! O God ! many are the Hands lift up against us, but there is one God, it is thou thy self, O Father ! who does more Mischief than they all.* We know, O Lord, that Abraham made a Covenant, Moses and David made a Covenant, and our Saviour made a Covenant, but thy Parliament's Covenant is the greatest of all Covenants. I presume you desire no more of such intolerable profane and lewd Stuff as this : However, if you are curious, you may find these and many more Instances of this nature in *Dugdale's Short View of the Troubles of England*, where Times, Places, and Persons are particularly named. But the substantial part of the Objection is behind, for I conceive that the greatest Offence is taken at some of our Collects in the Service of our Church, which are to be found in the Roman Mass-book, though it was never made appear that they contain'd any thing contrary to the Word of God,

God, or the practice of Antiquity, and consequently they may be join'd in, without Sin, tho' they are made use of in the Church of *Rome*; and to condemn them meerly upon that account is a piece of intolerable Prejudice and Partiality, and can never be the Effects of a peaceable and truly scrupulous Conscience. For, certainly all is not to be esteem'd Popery which is practised in that Church, and therefore it cannot be our Duty to run into Extremes, and depart further from her than she hath from the Truth; for if so, we must forsake Christianity it self in detestation of Popery: To reform, surely, is not to cast away every thing that was in use before, unless Barbarism be the only Sign of a perfect Reformation. I cannot leave this Point without desiring you to consider the dismal Consequences that will be the necessary Effects of Separation upon such a trifling Objection as this, what Scenes of Ruin, Blasphemy and Heresie, will be the unavoidable Results of subverting the Liturgy of our Church! Of this, some years ago, had a fatal Conviction; for no sooner was our *Common-Prayer* put down, but an Intindation of such monstrous and extravagant Opinions broke in, that this Confession was extorted even from the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, *We have thought fit, least we partake of other Men's Sins,* and thereby be in danger to receive of their Plagues, to set forth this our deep Sense of the great dishonour of God, and perillous Condition this Kingdom is in, through the abominable Blasphemies, and damnable Heresies vented and spread abroad in this Kingdom, tending to the subversion of the Faith, contempt of the Ministry and Ordinances of Jesus Christ. And we have the further Testimony of the Consistory of Divines, *We the Ministers of Jesus Christ, do hereby testifie to all the Kingdom, to all* the

the Reformed Churches, as our great dislike of *Pilacy*, *E-
rastianism*, *Brownism*, and *Independency*, so our utter
abhorrence of *Antiscripturism*, *Papery*, *Arianism*, *Soci-
nianism*, *Arminianism*, *Antimonianism*, *Anabaptism*,
Libertinism, and *Famulism*, with all such like now too
rise amongst us: Nay, such Confusion of Sects and
Heresies were introduce'd into the Kingdom, that
those who were very active, and introduced the Ser-
vice of our Church in the blackest and most odious
Characters, were fore'd to own that upon Tryal,
our Liturgy was far more desirable than that Anar-
chy and Confusion they had contended for with so
much Blood and Violence: If this be not sufficient
to qualifie the Edge of this Objection, give me leave
to inform you of the Author of it, and by what
means it was first unhappily broach'd in this King-
dom. In the time of the good Queen *Elizabeth*,
one *Faithful Commin*, a Dominican-Fryer, came over
into *England*, and pass'd under the Notion of a Zeal-
ous Puritan, and was much admired and followed
by the People, for his seeming Piety, Spiritual Gifts,
and Zeal against Papery; but being apprehended and
accus'd for an *Impostor*, was examined at large by
the Queen and her Council, and put under Bail,
when finding the Climate was like to be too hot for
him, and having by a Cheat, brought off his Bail,
and told his deluded Followers, that he was acquit-
ted by her Majesty and the Council, and warned of
God to go beyond the Seas, and having with abun-
dance of extemporary Prayers and Tears squeezed
out of them a Collection of an hundred and thirty
Pounds for his Journey, away he goes for *Rome*, and
acquaints Pope *Pius Quintus* with what he had done,
and particularly tells him, ' That by perswading his
Followers, that the Liturgy of *England* was only a
Translation

‘ Translation of the Mass-book, he had made that Church so irreconcileably odious to the Puritans, ‘ that it would be a Stumbling-block to her, while ‘ She was a Church; upon which the Pope commended, and rewarded him with two thousand Duckets for his good Service: This is matter of Fact and attested by invincible Authority; and this Relation, if seriously weigh’d, and consider’d, I hope will make a deep Impression upon you and the minds of all sober Dissenters, and at least in a great measure qualify if not absolutely silence this unjust Calumny against the Liturgy of our Church.

The Church of *England* lies under the imputation of Popery, because She makes use of the Cross in Baptism, and kneeling at the Communion, Ceremonies which in the Church of *Rome* are prostituted to Superstition and Idolatry. The first of these Scruples seem to be the effect of Prejudice and Passion, rather than a Conscience modestly scrupulous, since it is notoriously evident that any Man who ever read the Form of the Administration of Baptism in our Church, may be satisfy’d, that the Child is expressly said to be initiated into the Church before the Sign of the Cross is made, and consequently there is no operative Power allow’d to be in it, nor is it at all necessary to the Efficacy of the Sacrament. But it was thought decent and seasonable by the Founders of our Church, that when it had pleas’d God to receive a Person into his Favour, and to give him the Seal of it, the Church should solemnly declare and testify that he is receiv’d into Her Communion, by giving him the Badge of our common Religion; and this was done not in imitation of the Church of *Rome*, but of the Primitive Church, which according to the testimony of St. *Cyprian* and others, made use of this

this Sign many Centuries before the frightful Name of Popery was known in the World, and consequently it's not of Modern or Popish Extraction. And as to the Ceremony of Kneeling, if our Churches Declaration at the end of the Communion Service will not vindicate Her from the Imputation of Popery, I have nothing to say in Her defence: The Declaration is this; *Whereas it is ordain'd in this Office for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants should receive the same kneeling, (which Order is well meant for a signification of our humble and grateful Acknowledgment, of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers, and for the avoiding of such Prophanation and Disorder in the holy Communion as might otherwise ensue) yet least the same Kneeling should by any Person either out of Ignorance and Infirmitie, or out of Malice and Obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved, It is here declared, that thereby no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood; for the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural Substances, and therefore may not be adored; (for that were Idolatry to be abhor'd of all faithful Christians) and the Natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here, it being against the Truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places than one.* We see that our Church doth here not only declare, that no Adoration is in this Gesture intended, either to the Elements, or to Christ's Corporal Presence under the Species of Bread and Wine, but also, that as such a Pretence is absurd and contradictory, so the adoring of the Sacramental Bread and Wine would be Idolatry to be abhor'd of all faithful Christians: So that all the Idolatry and Superstition

tion, whereby the Church of *Rome* hath abused this Ceremony, is perfectly removed, and it is required only, as a decent and reverend Posture; which is sufficient to satisfie any Man that is not at an irreconcileable distance from the Church, and is a full Confutation of this Objection.

The last Reason of any moment which is made use of, to accuse the Church of *England* of Popery, is her Observation of Festivals, and because she makes the Memory of the Just to be Blessed. This is a very uncharitable Imputation, and I can no way account for it, but from Stubbornness and a sturdy Partiality; for it depends wholly upon the observation of Holy-Days in the Church of *Rome*, without any Reflection upon the thing it self, whether it contains any thing evil in it or not: I suppose our Adversaries would infer, that as we comply with the Church of *Rome* in the observation of Holy-Days, so we must necessarily comply with her in the Invocation of Saints and Angels; but this is a very unnatural Consequence, as evidently appears from our Collects, where, if any such thing is actually express'd, or can possibly intimate the least ground for such a Conclusion, I will engage, that the most zealous Protestant amongst us, will immediately open his Mouth and cry out Popery upon the Church of *England*.

Thus, Sir, have I curiously run through the most plausible Pretences that justifies this Calumny, and produc'd my own Thoughts, and the Opinions of very eminent Divines to their Confutation, so that I presume you may meet with some Satisfaction, if you are disposed to be satisfied; I have stated the Case with all the Candour and Ingenuity that I am Master of, and represented the Objections in their full

Strength and Latitude ; yet for a more effectual and general Confutation, I submit to your Judgment these two following Particulars.

If there be such a dangerous Affinity between the Church of *England* and the *Roman*, how came it to pass that the Blessed Instruments of our Reformation submitted of the stroaks of Martyrdom, in confirmation to the one, and Opposition to the other? For if those of the Church of *Rome* could have been so barbarous, as cruelly to Murther those Excellent Persons for some slight Innovations, or for differing from them in Circumstantial, yet certainly such wise and good Men would not have been so prodigal of their own Blood, nor weary of their Lives, as to cast them away upon Trifles. It is probable at least therefore that those of the Church of *Rome* thought the *English* Reformation to be (as it certainly is) essentially different from them, and it is more than probable that those Holy Men aforesaid thought so, and did not offer to God the Sacrifice of Fools.

Or how comes it to pass, that all those of the *Roman* Communion withdraw themselves from Ours, and are commanded so to do by the Head of their Church, under peril of Damnation? And on the other side, the true Protestants of the Church of *England* absent themselves from the *Roman* Worship, lest they should defile their Consciences with their Superstitions, I say how comes this distance and apprehension of Sin and Danger reciprocally, if the differences between them be inconsiderable? And further, how comes it to pass that the Bigots of the Church of *Rome*, entertain a greater Spite and Enmity against the Bishops, and Clergy of this Kingdom, than against any Sect or Party whatsoever, but that they take them not only for Enemies, but the most

most Mortal and Formidale of all they are concern'd with ?

New Sir, I have finisht what at first I propos'd, and I hope that you will not entertain such an Opinion of those Men of Eminent Parts and Honesty, who are so violent to cry out Popery upon the Church and Clergy of *England*, since I can peremptorily say, that they pretend no other grounds for it than what I have represented ; and if those are sufficient to excuse that Noise and Turbulency, that is generally made use of to Vilifie our Constitution, I am sorry that I have troubled you so long in the defence of it ; yet I am so vain as to perswade my self, that upon a serious Reflection you will discern the Weakness of them, to justifie that odious Calumny, and how insufficient they are to vindicate your Separation from the Church, especially if you are fully convinc'd of the heinous malignity of Schism, and a breach of that Communion wherein you might have continu'd without Sin : For that it's a Sin of the deepest Dye and greatest Guilt, will be easily allow'd, if you consider what Care our Saviour took to prevent it ! what Pains He us'd with his Disciples that they might be perfectly instructed, and not differ in the delivery of His Mind to the World ! what Diligence and Circumspection they us'd to Resist all beginnings of Schism in the Church ! how they taught their Profelytes to resist this Distemper as the Bane of Christianity, charging them to use the greatest caution against it, to mark and avoid all that inclin'd that Way, as Persons of a Contagious Breath and Infectious Society ! what odious Names they gave it, as Carnality, the Works of the Flesh and of the Devil ! I say, if you consider these Things, you cannot but be apprehensive of the

greatness of this Sin ; but if you will trace the sense of the Church a little further, you will find the Primitive Christians inspired with such detestation against it, that they thought it equal to the most notorious Sins, as Idolatry, Murder, and Sacrilege, in somuch that Martyrdom it self was not thought a sufficient Expiation for it. *To dye (says St. Cyprian) for Christ the Head, would not wash out the Stain of dividing the Church his Body ; It's better to suffer any thing than that the Church of God should be rent asunder, and if a Man must suffer Martyrdom, I think it equally acceptable to God, to lay down a Man's Life for the Peace and Unity of the Church, as in Testimony against that Idolatry (says Dionysius the good Bishop of Alexandria.)* And St. Cyprian again speaks very severely to the same purpose, viz. ‘ That a Person going from the Church to Schismaticks, tho’ in that Capacity he should die for Christ, yet can he not receive the Crown of Martyrdom ; and how often elsewhere does he assure us, That such an one has no part in the Law of God, or the Faith of Christ, or in Life and Salvation ; that without Unity and Charity a Man cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and that although he should deliver up himself to the Flames, or cast his Body to wild Beasts, yet this would not be the Crown of his Faith, but the Punishment of his Falshood, not the Glorious Exit of a Religious Courage, but the Issue of Despair ; such a one may be kill’d, but he cannot be crown’d ; he rents the Unity of the Church, destroys the Faith, disturbs the Peace, dissolves Charity, and profanes the holy Sacraments. This was the general Determination of the Ancient Fathers, and I am of Opinion, that the Glory of God, the Unity of the Church, and the Good of Men’s Souls, are of no less

less Importance in these latter Days of Christianity, are Things as considerable as necessary, and indispensable now as they were of Old. I am sensible, that you did not expect to find the Sin of Schism painted in such heinous Characters ; for I have often perceiv'd, that you are infatuated with the common Mistake, and that you presume that the Indulgence allow'd you by the Government, as it exempts you from the Penalty, so it absolutely removes the Guilt of Schism ; but I hope that Human Indulgencies can never vacate the Authority of Laws ratified in Heaven ; and I am of Opinion, that an Evil countenanc'd, and allow'd of by the Government, is rather of greater Guilt, because it is more Infectious than when it was kept under and stood in fear of the Laws ; and though the Temporal Punishment that was annex'd to the Sin of Schism is took off, yet the Obligation of it to Eternal Punishment is the same, and can only be dispenc'd with by God himself who laid it upon it.

If this be not sufficient to reconcile you to the Church, let me beg leaye to represent to you, who those Persons are that are so busie, to affix the Brand of Popery upon her ; they are not, I can assure you, those honest Men who are the first Promoters of this Calumny ; they have it only upon Trust, and as you, do implicitly strike in to make the Noise the more solemn and plausible ; for we are convinc'd by fatal Experience, that 'tis a common and dangerous Piece of Policy in the Church of *Rome*, to Commission their Emissaries whom they sent amongst us, to cry out *Popery* upon the Church of *England*, that they might make use of those of our Separation with the more unperceiveable Disguise to overthrow the whole Frame of the Kingdom : Hence it is that they

They put on every Shape, disguise themselves in every Sect, and so studiously promote our Divisions, to inspire their Followers with this infatuating Nation, to spur on the People to call for a more pure, powerful and Spiritual way of Worship, for Latitude and Comprehension, for any thing to subvert all Order in the Church, being fully convinc'd, that when they have beaten them out of all sober Principles, they must be necessitated at last to center in the Communion of the Church of *Rome*: Hence it is, that the publick Writings, and private Insinuations of Dissenters are full of this Charge against the Church and Clergy, in a joyn't Design to run down our Constitution, and disgrace our Priesthood; but withal, they would do well to consider how disingenuously they act, in opposing so excellent a Reformation, since they strengthen the Hands of the *Romans*, (whom they pretend to oppose) to the great Scandal of the Christian Religion, and the Protestant Interest. I wish they would reflect, how often they have been made use of as meer Tools in the Hands of Jesuits, to promote Desolation and Bloodshed in this poor Kingdom, and Instruments to Purposes, the utmost Extent whereof they never knew, or were made acquainted with. This Consideration, I hope, will oblige them to double their Diligence, to prevent the like dismal Consequences for the time to come, and not open the Gap again, at which they must necessarily flow in upon us: By what has been done, they may see what a blessed Reformation they must expect by the Ruin of this Church; for the Thing that hath been, is that which shall be, the same Causes set on foot by the same Principles, will eternally produce the same Effects: And tho' Men at first may mean never so well, yet Temptations will

will insensibly grow upon them, and Accidents happen, which in the Progress will carry them infinitely beyond the Line of their first Intentions, and engage them in Courses, out of which, when they come to discern their Error, it may be too late to retire: For who questions, but in our late Civil Distractions, the far greater part of our Dissenters met together with very honest and good Intentions, and designed no more than to correct some little Irregularities that they apprehended to be in Church or State; but we see how these very Persons were carried on from one Passage to another, and in time transported to those very Things which at first they had so vehemently protested and declared against, till at length, horrid Enormities came to be acted by and under them, which no Age can parallel; which ought to be a sufficient Caution how they shake the least Stone that belongs to the Foundation, lest by picking one after another, the whole House tumble about their Ears, when it is beyond their own Power to support it.

I hope, Sir, you will reflect upon what has been said, as the Effect of an honest and sincere Intention of a Mind zealously affected to serve the Church and Kingdom of *England*, and I am fully satisfied, that you will be convinc'd of the Protestantism of this Church; and consequently, you will return into Communion with her, which I am sorry to tell you, you have endeavour'd with common and profest Enemies to destroy. *I am, Sir,*

Your humble Servant, T. L.

Errata. Page 5. Line 18. for *Goreans*, read *Jo Peas.* p 14.
l. 8. for introduced, read traduced.

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